

Kopi Luwak: the cruelest coffee in the world



It is considered the most exclusive coffee in the world and is hyped by celebrities: kopi luwak, also known as „civet coffee“, otherwise known as „wolf“, „cat“, and „crap“ coffee. It is particularly digestible and free of bitter substances because the coffee beans pass through the intestinal tract of Asian palm civets and are supposedly fermented in the process. But for the luxury brew, thousands of the small predators are captured from the wild every year and crammed into batteries of cages.

Making money out of sh...

The name kopi luwak is a combination of the Indonesian words for coffee („kopi“) and for the Asian palm civet whose droppings are still most commonly used today: „musang luwak“.

Originally, farmers collected the excrement of wild animals on the coffee plantations, where the small omnivores would feed on the particularly ripe, juicy coffee cherries. The pulp is digested in the intestinal tract, and the coffee bean is excreted.

Label fraud on a grand scale

In the kopi luwak industry producers often label their coffee with a „wild sourced“ or similar labels.

However: In the last 15 years, this coffee has become increasingly popular internationally, and thanks to globalization and the Internet, it is finally available worldwide. According to estimates, all of Indonesia’s free-roaming Asian palm civet together supply only about 300 kilograms of kopi luwak per year. That is not

nearly enough to meet the growing demand. Nowadays kopi luwak is exported annually by the ton. As the international demand for kopi luwak increased, some producers turned to caged production methods to increase yields.

Coffee from cage batteries

Wild civets are caught by poachers, caged in barren cages on wire floors or rough wooden bars and forced coffee cherries in order to crap out the beans for the pleasure of the thousands. The shy animals are solitary nocturnal, but most cages barely protect them from sunlight and in proximity to other civets. The cruel keeping of the animals leads to severe behavioral disorders, fight among themselves and malnutrition.

Just a marketing coup?

Moreover, experts consider the refinement of coffee by the gastrointestinal tract of the Asian palm civet to be a myth. After all, they say, the beans are surrounded by a firm horny shell that protects them. Rather, the special taste comes from the exotic bean: *Coffea liberica*, which leads a shadowy existence in contrast to the leading varieties on the world market, Arabica and Robusta.

Accordingly, they see the production method using trapped civets as completely unnecessary, and not just for animal welfare reasons.

***Cruel, industrialised and overpriced:
It’s time to cut the crap!***